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“UNCLEAN, UNCLEAN”

BY VERNON KELLOGG

NOT every German is unclean. A few have protested against accepting the stigma that the rulers of Germany are so industriously and efficiently engaged in putting upon everybody in their land. But these few are mostly now in prison, like Liebknecht, or have managed to escape from the country, like Professor Nicolai, by sensational airplane flight to Denmark. Most Germans in Germany, and some out of it, seem unashamed to reveal the symptoms of their fatal inoculation with the loathesome disease of “nothing-counts-but-winning.” Approving deceit, robbery and cruelty, choosing international outlawry, sacrificing all personal feelings and morals, gloating over horrors, whining over reprisals, they advertise themselves by these as unmistakably as did the silvery lepers of old, when they called out “Unclean, unclean.”

Now this uncleanness, though an infectious disease, is yet an avoidable one. A few simple precautions and a strong-minded will not to succumb, and the individual is safe. Yet how few in Germany have held the disease at bay! The people as a whole seem to show an almost 100 per cent morbidity from the attacks of their dangerous national, or racial, disease. Hence will it be any wonder if after the war the people of the world when they recognize any human being as a German from Germany will shrink aside so that they may not touch him as he passes, or stoop for stones to drive him from their path? This will be cruel to the few that are not diseased, but it will be a warranted precaution against a general danger.

For the world is not going to get over easily or quickly its sorely-gained revelation of Germanic ailment. There was once a “man without a country.” There is going to be—there is already—a country without a world.

Germany holds this position wilfully and deliberately. She holds it largely because of an ultra-materialistic misreading or misinterpretation on the part of her selfish leaders, of the natural factors of human progress; that is, of organic evolution in general and of human evolution in particular.

Although evolution literally means “unrolling,” and has usually been construed to connote progress, biologists have consistently used the term simply to mean change from generalized to more specialized condition, and it is perfectly recognized by them that specialization may be achieved by changes that are not at all in harmony with our general idea of progress or movement upward.

Thus, specialization may, and does, often involve loss or atrophy of parts or functions in place of addition or special development of them. And this specialization by loss is as truly evolution as is specialization by gain. For example, many highly specialized parasites have lost their wings or legs, for active locomotion is unnecessary to these sedentary creatures who pass their life clinging to their host by hooks or mouthparts. They are also marked by loss of eyes and ears and other organs of special sense, for these organs are little needed when locomotion is given up. Such highly specialized parasites are good examples of an evolutionary movement along lines leading to success in the struggle for existence—for they are, biologically, very successful—but they are lines which we do not wish to imitate.

Another form of successful evolutionary achievement is the highly developed purely predatory animal, the creature of long and strong tooth and claw, of great speed and strength, of unscrupulous cunning and trickery, of cold-blooded cruelty, sustained ferocity and insatiable lust of blood. This creature may be at the same time much of a coward and prefer to attack defenceless prey, or to hunt in well-organized and shrewdly-led packs. But tiger or great grey wolf, black leopard or howling hyena, however specialized and “advanced” as an evolutionary product, and however biologically successful, he is not a product that we like, or whose characteristics we would have evolution add to those of man. Not everything that is produced by natural laws, or that is “biologically successful,” is necessarily admirable or to be set up for human imitation.

The crime for which Professor Nicolai had to flee Germany by airplane was the writing of a book called “*Die*

Biologie des Kriegeres” in which he points out clearly and elaborately the mistakes in the usual German interpretation of the biologic conditions of human evolution. He shows the fallacy of their acceptance of “social Darwinism,” and tries to recall them, philosophers and statesmen and military leaders and dynastic rulers, from following further the fatal way of their misunderstanding. But this man who sees the truth and would save his country has had difficulty in saving himself from his country’s fury. For Germany’s leaders and the teachers of her people have accepted the law of natural selection, based on a rigorous and ruthless fatal struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, as a state policy, as a popular philosophy, indeed, as a religion. And they see in the biological success of the bloodthirsty tiger types in Nature the full justification of their type of militarism. The preservation, by natural selection of the tiger in the world of beasts gives them every hope to expect the preservation by similar natural law, of the German in the world of man.

So Germany has become diseased. And the disease has been accepted and fostered and looked on not as a calamity but as a glory. And so most of the Germans in Germany, and some outside of it, have become unclean, and will have to walk the world as a marked people, avoided, despised, stoned. Though it be war-time or peace-time, for a long time “German” and “Made in Germany” are going to be equivalent, both as regards persons and things, as “Unclean, unclean.” What a fate! What a penalty! A few Germans are beginning to see what this means. Take it in the matter of trade, for example. Instead of proudly sticking on the “Made in Germany” label, they must henceforth try to conceal the hated origin of their manufactures if they would find a market for them outside their own land—and this market they must some way find. So an eminent industrial engineer, one Herzog, writes a book of amazing naiveté and Germanic revelation, telling just what devious means must be followed to sell the wares to a world determined not to buy them, and what other means must be devised to smuggle in or force in to Germany the raw materials from outside without which certain particular German industries cannot go on at all. Such tricks of trade, such unscrupulous commercial deceit and knavery are certainly nowhere else so bluntly and blandly set forth outside the Thieves’ Own Manual.

Other Germans less interested in trade than social stand-

ing and globe-trotting and living comfortably in foreign parts are wondering just how they are going to resume their interrupted pleasures of life in London and Paris after the war. Or rather they are not so much wondering as feeling convincingly dubious about it. My escort officer at Great Headquarters, Count W., used to murmur sometimes his regrets for the interrupted ease and comfort of the Carlton Hotel and the Junior Carlton Club. He, with many others like him, had long found London a more desirable place to live in than Berlin.

“I hate these detestable English—but I do love London,” he used to confess. And his not too quick mind was beginning to realize that it was just possible that it would not be too soon after the war, nor too easy at any time in the years he should live, to fill his usual chair in the club window again.

“Why this universal hate of us?” he would pathetically ask his Belgian Relief American companion. “We are fighting the world now, but after it is over why can’t things go on as before? We can’t be shut up in Germany all the time.”

Quarantine! That is exactly what human society has to do to protect itself from infectious uncleanness. It is not even for the sake of punishment; it is just for the sake of protection. Germany infected Russia and Italy. She has tried to infect France and England and America. In war time or peace time the disease is dangerous. It simply has to be guarded against. And the quarantine has to be rigorous. Those not diseased but who have been exposed to it will have to suffer along with the actually tainted. It will be with the innocent Germans as it was with the innocent Belgians after Governor-General von der Goltz’s famous order was placarded. If anything happens to a railroad or telegraph or telephone line near a village, the village will be punished, “whether innocent or guilty”. Hostages have been taken from each village and if anything happens they will be shot. And they were shot.

So to be German from Germany after this war will be a presumption of guilt, a presumption of dangerous disease. It may be hard; it may be unfair; but it will be unescapable. I am not arguing for it; I am simply recognizing it. I am simply hearing the cry, “Unclean, unclean.”

VERNON KELLOGG.